

# **Clark Fork River Basin Task Force On Water Management Plan**

**Issue Brief # 1 – July 25, 2002**

## **Origin**

The 2001 Montana Legislature passed House Bill 397, “An Act Establishing the Clark Fork River Basin Task Force....” The bill, signed into law by Governor Martz, requires the Governor to “[D]esignate an appropriate entity to convene and coordinate a Clark Fork River basin task force to prepare a water management plan for the Clark Fork River basin pursuant to 85-1-203” of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA).

In response to this legislation, on July 2, 2001, Governor Martz asked the Montana Consensus Council to “take the lead in organizing, convening, and facilitating a task force to develop a water management plan for the Clark Fork River basin in Montana.” In passing HB 397, the Legislature provided \$120,000 to support its implementation beginning in Fiscal Year 2003, which begins on July 1, 2002.

HB 397 states that all watersheds and viewpoints within the basin should be adequately represented on the Task Force.

Prior to convening the Task Force, the Consensus Council prepared a situation assessment to identify the people concerned about water management in the Clark Fork River basin, understand and document their interests and concerns, and how water management issues are now being addressed and how they are likely to be addressed in the future. The report on the assessment, *Water Management in the Clark Fork River Basin: A Situation Assessment in Response to HB 397* (February 2002), is available from the Consensus Council.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Task Force, as defined by HB 397, is to prepare a water management plan for the Clark Fork River basin that (1) *Identifies options to protect the security of water rights;* (2) *Provides for the orderly development of water;* (3) *Provides for the conservation of water in the future.* The water management plan will be submitted to the legislature and the Governor by September 2004.

In the process of developing the water management plan, the Task Force is required to examine existing laws, rules, plans, and other provisions affecting water management in the Clark Fork River basin. The Task Force is also required to provide opportunities for public participation in the development of the water management plan.

## Participants

Through a process of self-selection, the following people have volunteered to participate as members of the Task Force:

Member/Alternate	Representing Stakeholder/Watershed Group
Bill Kleinhans, Flathead Conservation District	Flathead Basin above Flathead Lake
Marc Spratt, RLK Hydro	
Steve Fry, Avista	Hydropower
Holly Franz, PPL Montana	
Matt Clifford, Clark Fork Coalition	Conservation/Environment
Phil Tourangeau, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes	Tribes
Commissioner Gail Patton, Sanders County Commission	Local Government
Eugene Manley, Granite County	
Jay Stuckey, Green Mountain Conservation District	Clark Fork River Watershed below Flathead River confluence
Mike Miller, Alternate	Clark Fork River Watershed below Flathead River confluence
Elna Darrow, Flathead Basin Commission	Flathead Lake
Bill Slack, Joint Board of Control	Flathead River Watershed below Flathead Lake to the confluence with the Clark Fork River
Harvey Hackett, Bitter Root Water Forum	Bitterroot River Watershed
Land Lindberg, Blackfoot Challenge	Blackfoot River Watershed
Tina Bernd-Cohen (Alternate) Blackfoot Challenge	
Jim Dinsmore, Granite Conservation District and Upper Clark Fork River Basin Steering Committee	Upper Clark Fork River Watershed

## Montana Consensus Council

The Montana Consensus Council (MCC) is a non-profit organization that is attached to the Office of the Governor for administrative purposes. It was created by executive order in 1994 after a group of farmers, ranchers, environmentalists, legislators, and state and federal officials agreed on the need for an ongoing forum to help citizens and officials resolve natural resource disputes. The mission of MCC is to promote effective natural resource and other public policy through public processes that are inclusive, informed, and deliberative. MCC is impartial and non-partisan; it is not an advocate for any particular interest or outcome.

For more information on the Clark Fork water management project or the Montana Consensus Council, please call Matthew McKinney at 406-444-2075 or go to our web site at [www.mcc.state.mt.us](http://www.mcc.state.mt.us).